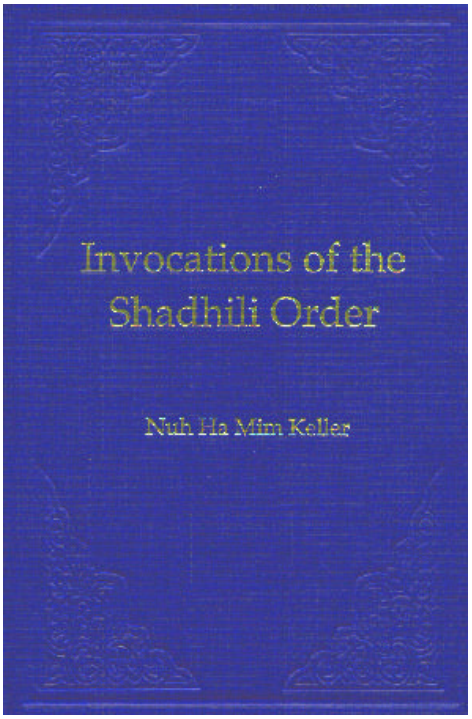
Invocations of Shaadhili Order



by Nuh Ha Mim Keller

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Violations of the Muslims Creed (Aqeedah)
In Page 1, Keller says:

"This blessed collection contains those of the invocations and prayers of the Pole and Succor my master Abul Hasan al-Shadhili"

Comments:

Before stating the comment, let's consider first the definition of the terms "pole" and "succor". The term Pole in Sufi literature means the "perfect man" who holds Allah's attention in this world; all the affairs of creation revolve around him. He takes his way in the universe, both the seen and unseen parts of it, as the spirit takes its way in the body. He could also be called al-Gouth (Succor, i.e. helper) because people seek his assistance in case of adversity. Ahmad al-Tijani (the founder of the Tijani Sufi order) said, "The reality of the Pole status is that he is great vicegerent of Al-Haqq (i.e. Allah) in all the universe, wherever Allah is a God, the pole is his vicegerent in the sense that he (i.e. the pole) carries out all the decrees that Allah might have. So, nothing will reach the creation except through the pole." [1]

1. A Muslim wonders where the Sufis got these ideas from. The Sufis claim that they follow the Quran and the Sunnah but they adopt concepts that contradict these two sources.
2. Why would Allah need a human to help Him run the affairs of the universe?
3. What are our duties as "generic" Muslims towards the Pole?
4. Should we seek help, in case of adversity, from Allah or from the Pole/Succor?

Page 7:
Keller mentions a chain of narrators who narrated the invocations of the Shadhili order.

That chain continues until it reaches Allah SWT.

He says**: "… who had from my master Habib al-'Ajami, and he from my master al-Hasan al-Basri, who took it from my master 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah ennoble his countenance), who took it from the master of the first to last, and beloved of the Lord of the worlds, our liegelord Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace), who took it from the trustworthy spirit our master Gabril (upon whom be peace), and he from the Lord of Power, glorious be His majesty."**

Comments:

According to the belief of Muslims, any text (narrated via authentic chain of narrators) that goes back to Allah SWT, must either be in the Quran or Hadith.

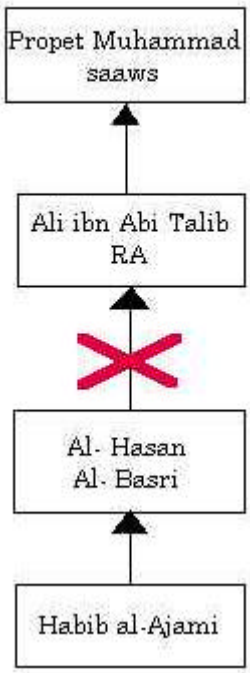
Keller clearly states -as the reader can see- that these innovations have a chain of narrators that goes back to Allah SWT. Hence, these invocations must be either Quran or Hadith! No However no Muslim scholars would agree to such a claim. We request the Sufis to name one scholar who would agree with Keller's statement and its implications. Amongst the reasons scholars of Hadith would reject this claim is:

These invocations have a fundamental problem when it comes to its Isnad (chain of narrators).

Problem with Isnad

According to the scholars of Hadith, Al-hasan al-Basri could not have narrated Hadith from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib RA. Among those scholars are:

- Imam Abu Zur'ah who was asked whether al-Hasn al-Basri RA heard hadith from any of the companions who witnessed the battle of Badr (the first battle the Prophet SAAWS fought). Abu Zur'ah said that al-Hasan saw many of them including Othman RA and Ali RA. Abu Zur'ah was then asked if al-Hasan had heard hadith from these two. He replied: "No, he -al-Hasan- saw Ali RA in Madinah then Ali left to al-Koofah and al-Hasan did not see him after that.
- Imam Ali bin al-Madini said: "al-Hasan had not seen Ali RA unless he saw him in Madinah when he (al-Hasan) was young.
- Among those scholars (who disproved that Hasan Al-Basri narrated Hadith from Ali Ibn Abi Talib) is Imam ibn Hajar al-Askalani (d 852 H) who is considered one of the greatest scholars of hadith. He is the one who wrote Fath al-Bari, which is regarded by all the scholars as the best explanation of Sahih al-Bukhari.
- Imam Buhz bin Asad said: "Only the ignorant people claim that al-Hasan had heard hadiths from 70 of the companions who witnessed the battle of Badr.



The above statements were quoted by two prominent scholars of hadith:

1. Imam ibn Hajar: See Tahdheeb al-Kamal, vol. 2 page 231, published by dar al-Fikr, 1984. Ibn Hajar is the Imam who authored Fath al-Bari, a commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari.
2. Imam Abi Hatim: See al-Maraseel, page 938, published by dar al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah, first edition, 1938.

As a result, the Isnad is considered broken which renders the text being narrated unacceptable. It is worth mentioning that most Sufi orders claim they have Isnad which goes through Al-Hasan al-Basri RA who narrates from Ali ibn Abi Talib RA. (a fabricated claim)

The above is just another sign that reveals that the Sufi masters –in general- did not pay attention to the science of Hadith. If the readers go to the books of Hadith that provide biographies of the scholars or narrators of Hadith, they will find almost no Sufi master among them. This fact forces the late Sufis to claim that some distinguished Hadith scholars – like an-Nawawi and ibn Hajar- were Sufis. If this was true, then we ask them, which Sufi order/tariqa did an-Nawawi and ibn Hajar follow?

If these invocations were narrated through authentic sources, then how come they are not mentioned in any of the books that compile the authentic Hadith of the Prophet SAAWS. If these were authentic, then the following questions are legitimate:

- Why were Muslims unaware of them until al-Shadhili (the founder of the Shadhili order) made them public, six centuries after the Prophet's death?
- Why are these narrations not mentioned in the works of the great scholars of hadith, like al-Bukhari, Muslim, at-Tirmidhi, etc?

Page 77:

Keller quotes a Sufi 'ibn Mashish' saying the following supplication:

"And plunge me into the seas of the absolute oneness which encompasses the composite and the simple; and pluck me from the mires of affirming [Tawheed], to the infinite space of singularizing the One, transcendently beyond absoluteness or conditionednees; And drown me in the very sea of [al-Wahdah], in Gnostic vision, until I do not see, or hear, or find, or sense anything but it, whether descending or ascending, as shall ever be existence."

[Between the brackets is the original word in Arabic. We did not use Keller's translation because it does not convey the FULL Arabic meaning.]

Comments:

This statement of Abd al-Salam ibn Mashish (on of the Sufis) has been considered kufr by tens of scholars. And therefore its being mentioned by Keller shows either his weakness in understanding the seriousness of this statement, or his lack of concern towards its kuffr.

The reason this statement was declared kuffr is the fact that ibn Mashish was not satisfied with the Tawheed everyday Muslims believe in (that Allah is one and the creator of all the creation). But rather he preferred to "drown into the sea of al-Wahdah," which means uniting with or joining with Allah (wanting to move out of creation and into the creator).

Keller and his support of old extreme Sufis

Page 13: Keller says:

"My master 'Abd al-Wahhaab al-Sha'rani says: '(In) every sheikh Allah has placed his help, his secret, and the secret of his order in the daily invocations he has the disciple recite. So whoever misses his daily litany has broken his covenant with his sheikh. They are unanimous that no disciple has ever missed his litany save that the divine assistances were cut off from him that day.'"

Comments:

1. Comments on the statement can be found elsewhere.
2. Contemporary (later) Sufis tried to distance themselves from traditional Sufis, who were known to promote extreme concepts. Many of those (traditional) Sufis were pronounced Kuffar by Muslim scholars.

<u>Keller however finds no problem in mentioning and praising many such extreme (traditional) Sufis in his writings, including:-</u>

- Ahmad Zarruq: Keller mentions him in the chain of narrators in page 3:

This Sufi said "And in case you are in a state of distress, depression and adversity, then call (saying): 'O Zarruq', and I will come in haste"
The above statement is found in page 108, The Dispraise of al-Hawa by Saleh al-Saleh, Published by dar al-Bukhari, 1998.

Comments: This statement and its utterance is clear Shirk, may Allah protect us from that. Ameen.

- · Al-Sha'arani: Al-Sha'arani is quoted on page 13 of the book we are reviewing. He is also praised by Keller as a " Sha'afi scholar and prolific author in works in Sufism, sacred law and tenants of faith…"[2]

Al-Sha'arani is a Sufi who wrote a book about Sufi's and filled it with Sufi superstitions and fairy tales. These are examples from the "Sufi Master" al-Sha'arani's book:

1. “a man would not attain the levels of the siddiqeen, until he leaves his wife as if she was a widow, his kids as if they were orphans, and takes refuge in dogs pens."[3]
2. Ash-Sha’arani also praised a celebrated Sufi, who “cut of his own private part in the beginning of his ‘Jathbah'[4] a mystic Sufi state.”
3. Ash-Sha’arani considers Ibraheem al-Arian as one of the awliya’ (friends of Allah) and mentions amongst his Karamah (wonders):

"He -may Allah be pleased with him- was entering a village greeting its people, old and young, by their names as if he had been raised amongst them. And he -may Allah be pleased with him- would get on the pulpit and give a speech naked."[5]

This description of this great sufi sheikh gives a glimpse of the sufi 'inner knowledge" (or heart knowledge), which we Ahlu-sunnah wa-aljama'ah, can't enjoy. Since we have sunk deeply into the books of Sunnah and lost the road to Sufi freedom. So enjoy the Sufi freedom above.

Over praising Sheikhs

Page 13: Keller says:

“My master ‘Abd al-Wahhaab al-Sha’rani says: ‘Every sheikh Allah has placed his help, his secret, and the secret of his order in the daily invocations he has the disciple recite. So whoever misses his daily litany has broken his covenant with his sheikh. They are unanimous that no disciple has ever missed his litany save that the divine assistances were cut off from him that day.’”

Comments:

1. Intellect is the most precious faculty that Allah SWT has provided humankind. Allah refers to it in numerous places in the Quran:

“Many are the Jinns and men We have made for Hell: they have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle, nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning)” Verse 179, Surah 7 -Al-A'raf

2. What is the sheikh’s “secret”? Recently, Sufis claim to follow the Quran and the Sunnah. If this is true, then let one of them provide us evidence from any of these two sources that the concept of the sheikh's secret exists in Islam.
3. What is the sheikh’s “covenant”? Where did this concept come from? We need a proof from the Quran and the Sunnah.
4. Is it not better if they tied a person to Allah instead of the sheikh? What if Allah caused the sheikh to deviate? We have to remember that Prophet Muhammad SAAWS used to make the following du’a: “O flipper of the hearts, keep my heart firm on your religion.” (Recorded by Ahmad and al-Trimidhi) If the

5. Prophet SAAWS was scared his heart may deviate, we must realize that no sheikh is infallible or perfect.
6. How did al-Sha'rani know that divine assistances would be cut off? Where is the evidence from the Quran or the Sunnah?
7. The reality is these statements, and others like them, are used to plant the seed of blind following in the followers' hearts to scare them from breaking away from the Sufi path. Remember that Keller himself is a Sufi sheikh, and has followers. This statement of his seems self-serving.
8. Al-Sha'arni was a Sufi who wrote a book about Sufi people and filled it with Sufi superstitions and fairy tales. E xamples of his writings are provided above.

In Page 19 Keller says:

"Another of the litanies is al-Hizb al-kabir [The Grand Invocation], by sheikh Abul Hasan al-Shadhili (Allah be well pleased with him), also known as hizb al-Barr [the litany of the land]. The sheikh said of it (Allah be well pleased with him): 'whoever recites our invocation shall have what we do, and bear what we bear.' He also said (Allah be well pleased with him), 'whoever learns it by heart is one of my companions'."

Comments:

1. It seems that al-Shadhili (the founder of the Shadhili order) is putting himself in an equal footing with the Prophet SAAWS in the sense that he encouraged his companions to recite his invocations like the way the Prophet SAAWS encouraged his companions to recite the prophetic invocations.
2. On what grounds did this "Sufi master" request his followers to learn his invocation by heart.

In Page 102 Keller says:

"The conditions of a sheikh to whom a disciple may entrust himself are…"

Comments:

1. Who said that a person should entrust himself to a sheikh?
2. Did the Prophet SAAWS ask Muslims to entrust themselves to a sheikh.
3. The Sufis are requested to show us evidence from the Quran or the Sunnah, since they claim that they follow them.

In Pages 102-103 Keller says:

"The conduct of the disciple towards the sheikh and brethren consists in five things: following what the sheikh says, even if something else seems better; avoiding what he forbids, even if it means one's death; upholding the sheikh's honor be he absent or present, alive or dead; fulfilling the sheikh's rights to the

degree possible, without remissness; and suspending one's intellect, knowledge, and leadership, except as the sheikh confirms."

Comments: This statement is self-explanatory. However there are some comments that need to be made:

The above statement of Keller implies one of the following:

1. The sheikh is infallible so the Mureed (i.e. follower) must obey him, or

- The sheikh is fallible but the Mureed is Islamically obligated to obey his sheikh's commands, even if that entails committing haram (unlawful acts).
- These 2 implications have very serious consequences. Hence they can't be accepted without clear evidence from the Quran or the Sunnah. The fact of the matter is that Allah and His Messenger reject the above statement and, of course, its implications.

2. In the life of the prophet SAAWS, we find the companions discussed matters with the Prophet SAAWS, and they might politely object to some of his actions. Take for example the following Hadith recorded by

al-Bukhari RA in Volume 2, Book 23, Number 359: Narrated by Ibn 'Umar:

> When 'Abdullah bin Ubai (the chief of hypocrites) died, his son came to the Prophet and said, "O Allah's Apostle! Please give me your shirt to shroud him in it, offer his funeral prayer and ask for Allah's forgiveness for him." So Allah's Apostle (SAAWS) gave his shirt to him and said, "Inform me (When the funeral is ready) so that I may offer the funeral prayer." So, he informed him and when the Prophet intended to offer the funeral prayer, 'Umar took hold of his hand and said, "Has Allah not forbidden you to offer the funeral prayer for the hypocrites? The Prophet said, "I have been given the choice for Allah says: '(It does not avail) Whether you (O Muhammad) ask forgiveness for them (hypocrites), or do not ask for forgiveness for them. Even though you ask for their forgiveness seventy times, Allah will not forgive them." (9.80) So the Prophet offered the funeral prayer and on that the revelation came: "And never (O Muhammad) pray (funeral prayer) for any of them (i.e. hypocrites) that dies." (9. 84)
>
> Compare this to Keller's statement: "suspending one's intellect, knowledge, and leadership, except as the sheikh confirms."

3. In the lives of the four rightly guided khalifahs (Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman and Ali, may Allah be pleased with them all): One may find numerous authentic stories in which common Muslims object to those guided khalifahs and they were not asked to suspend there "intellect, knowledge, and leadership, except as the khalifahs confirms". Keep in mind that no Sufi sheikh can measure up or even get close to the level of any of those khalifah who are promised Paradise

4. and whose footsteps we were ordered to follow in the hadith narrated by al-bara bin Azib, in which the Prophet SAAWS said, "Hold fast to my Sunnah (way) and the Sunnah of the rightly guided khalifah after me." (Recorded by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood, and Ibn Majah)
5. Can a sufi mureed (i.e. follower) have 2 sheikhs? If yes, then which one should he obey if they gave him conflicting orders?

Sufi Heresies

In Pages 88-89, Keller says about the al-Yaqutiyya Litany:

About the al-Yaqutiyya Litany, he said: "Another of the litanies is al-Yaqutiyya [The Invocation of the Priceless Gem], by the great teacher and sheikh Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Mas'ud al-Fasi (Allah be well pleased with him), who after authoring it saw the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) pointing with his noble index finger at the sheikh's chest and saying, 'This is the impregnable secret.' He then showed it to the inner circle of the saints, and it won their approval, and the Pole said, 'whoever regularly recites it three times, morning and evening, shall frequently see the Prophet, both awake and asleep, in the sensory and the spiritual.' It is also related from the teacher that one of the brethren entered a retreat in which he unceasingly recited it for seven days, and he did not depart before he had met the Prophet while awake and taken knowledge's and secrets from him."

Comments:

1. Since when did dreams become a source of legislation? (We are assuming that al-Fasi saw the Prophet while asleep.)

   The right to issue a religious command or prohibition belongs to Allah SWT alone, whether concerning beliefs, rituals, worship, or mundane affairs. He describes this in the verse, "The command (or the judgment) is for none but Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him." (Surah 12, Verse 40) And even though the Prophet Muhammad SAAWS was honored and blessed with the last prophethood by Allah SWT, nonetheless the Prophet SAAWS never spoke about religious matters without receiving revelation from Allah. There are numerous examples in the pages of authentic literature on the Prophet's life, SAAWS, which clearly demonstrate his habit of waiting for revelation from Allah before answering questions about the religion.

   As for using one's dreams as a source of revelation from Allah, this matter must be properly understood in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah, lest a person depends upon Satan instead of Allah.

   Religious revelation, whether through a dream or other forms of inspiration, belongs to prophets.

There are some mentionable examples of Prophet's whose dreams served as a source of revelation for them; but this trait is solely for the Prophets of Allah. The Prophet Ibrahim's dream, in which he saw himself sacrificing his son, Ismail, was interpreted as a religious command for him, which he attempted to follow (see Surah 37, Verses 102-106). Prophet Muhammad SAAWS saw Aisha presented to him by Gibreel in a dream (the hadith may be found in Bukhari), which was a type of command for the Prophet SAAWS to marry her later in their lives. However, commanding dreams are not found in the lives of anyone other than the Prophets of Allah. Our ways of worship, including du'aa since the Prophet SAAWS said that supplication is worship, cannot be taken from the dreams of normal men anymore than they can be taken from the statements of normal men. Religious revelation, whether through a dream or other forms of inspiration, belongs to prophets. This is the crux of their prophethood. How can anyone claim to have received a religious revelation from Allah, unless he/she is claiming to be a prophet of Allah?

Although a Muslim, or in rare cases a Kafir, may have a dream foretelling a future event, this is not to be considered a religious revelation or command. There is a difference between seeing the truth, whether through dreams or scientific findings, etc., and receiving religious commands and prohibitions, 'wahy' in Arabic. The truth is open to everyone. It is all around us. Allah created the heavens and the earth as a sign for those who reflect. And sometimes, a person may also see reality in his dreams. But, the religion of Allah is a special matter that He has entrusted to mankind in a special way, through chosen prophets, who are not to be contradicted, opposed, or competed with in the matter of their Message.

For the sake of argument, imagine that a person (other than a prophet) did accept his own dreams as a source of religious law and practice. Dreams come from three sources: Allah, Satan, and the ramblings of the mind as mentioned in the hadith. If a person accepts his dreams as a source of religious revelation, then it is possible for Satan to deceive him through his dreams. Even in some waking visions, sometimes Satan appears to a person in a radiant form, inviting him to other than Allah's religion; of course, he is able to do the same in a sleeping dream. In the end, the person would certainly be confused about his Lord and his religion. Furthermore, he is pursuing a part of prophethood for himself. Allah SWT informed us of various motivations behind the kufr men commit, including the desire for prophethood, as He says, "Nay, but everyone of them desires that he should be given open pages (from Allah). Nay, verily, they fear not the Hereafter." (Surah 74, Verses 52-53) May Allah protect us from this envy, and open our hearts to His verse, "Allah knows best with whom to place His Message." (Surah 6, Verse 124)

Islam is simple and complete. One need only learn and understand the Quran and the Sunnah to know his religion. Dreams are not always founded in reality; and only the dreams of prophets are founded in religious revelation. There is no need, and truly it is a grave mistake, to search through dreams in order to

2. What is the impregnable secret? Why are there so many secrets in the Sufi path?
3. Are there secrets in Islam? The truth opposes the secrecy the Sufis deal in; it is open and welcoming, not elusive and exclusive. What does the "inner circle of the saints" mean?
    - Who are its members?
    - How do they differ from the saint in Christianity?
    - How do they differ from everyday Muslims?
    - What gives them their authority to approve or disapprove?
    - Why does the Prophet SAAWS need to show them the litany to win their approval? Do they share with the Prophet's role as a lawgiver?
    - What are the obligations of generic Muslims towards them?
    - How can one tell if this story has really happened? What if someone claimed that he saw the Prophet SAAWS and he –the Prophet SAAWS- has authorized him to use certain litany and to call people to its use? How can we tell if he is telling the truth or lying? The reader must have noticed that this kind of story cannot be subjected to the rigorous filtration process the scholars have used to sift out unauthentic hadiths.

4. Regarding the statement, "and the Pole said, 'whoever regularly recites it three times, morning and evening, shall frequently see the Prophet, both awake and asleep, in the sensory and the spiritual.'"

   Why did the Prophet SAAWS not tell his companions about this litany? If this litany is part of Islam, then there is only one

    - The Prophet SAAWS did not know about it, i.e. he was ignorant, or
    - The Prophet SAAWS knew about it but failed to inform his companions about it, i.e. he did not convey the message as he was supposed to do.

No Muslim in his/her right mind would attribute any of the above to our Prophet SAAWS but this is the implication of what Keller is saying.

5. Keller also said, "'It is also related from the teacher that one of the brethren entered a retreat in which he unceasingly recited it for seven days, and he did not depart before he had met the Prophet while awake and taken knowledge and secrets from him."
    - Who is this brother? According to scholars of hadith such Isnad (chain of narrators) is not accepted because of the narrator being unknown.
    - We wonder if this is the Isnad the Sufis always talk about? Compare it to the Isnad of Ahul Sunnah! (Where everyone in the chain is known and recorded as an honest person.)
    - What is the knowledge and secrets that he took from the Prophet? We assume they are religious matters, so how do they relate to the Shari'ah (Islamic legislation) we got from the Prophet SAAWS? Does this knowledge and secrets abrogate the Shari'ah?
    -

- What if someone claimed that he saw the Prophet SAAWS, who gave some secret knowledge contradicting some practices established by the Shari'ah? Then how would common Muslims who follow the Shari'ah make sensible discussion with him?

In Page 94 Keller says:

"The Latifiyya is recited in a group on Tuesday nights, and there is general permission to participate for both people who have taken the tariqa and others who may attend."

Comments:

1. Does it work if we recite it Sunday night?
2. Where did this Latifiyya come from?
3. Who has the authority to give the permission?
4. What if someone did some of the tariqa Dhikr without permission? Will he/she be held responsible on the Day of Judgment for that? Will some harm befall him/her?

In Page 94 Keller says:

Regarding the Latifiyyah, he says: "It has been related, as to its number, that some who have great spiritual ambition recite 'O Gently Kind' 14,444 times all of which pertains to saying it in a group."

Comments:
Who related this? Is it authentic? Who counted it?

Sufi orders disunite Muslims

In Page 19 Keller says:

"Another of the litanies is al-Hizb al-kabir [The Grand Invocation], by sheikh Abul Hasan al-Shadhili (Allah be well pleased with him), also known as hizb al-Barr [the litany of the land]. The sheikh said of it (Allah be well pleased with him): 'whoever recites our invocation shall have what we do, and bear what we bear.' He also said (Allah be well pleased with him), 'whoever learns it by heart is one of my companions'."

Comments:

1. The founder of the Shadhili order considered reciting hizb al-Bar the criterion by which he divides the Muslims into two groups: (1) His people and (2) the rest of Muslims.
2. To this day whenever the scholars of Islam refute such deviant people, the scholars get criticized for "breaking the unity of Muslims." Please

3. notice that these Sufi sheikhs are clearly calling people into there many different Tariqa's and trying to create differences between Muslims (as seen above). While the scholars of Islam are only calling people back to the Quran and the Sunnah i.e. true Islam.
4. What does "shall have what we do, and bear what we bear" mean? What do his followers have that the rest of the Muslims do not have? What do they bear that the rest of the Muslims do not bear?

In Page 94 Keller says:

"The Latifiyya is recited in a group on Tuesday nights, and there is general permission to participate for both people who have taken the tariqa and others who may attend."

Comments:

1. Who are those "others" that Keller is talking about? Are they fellow Muslims?
2. If yes, then since when has there been a Dhikr that only some Muslims can recite? This way of thinking resulted in disuniting Muslims into people who have taken the tariqa and those who have not.

Putting one's self in a position of legislation which belongs to Allah and His messenger only

In Page 18 Keller quotes another Sufi (Ibn Ayyad) saying regarding hizb al-Bahr:

"Whoever recites it every day at sunrise, Allah hears his prayer, relieves his distress, raises his standing among people, expands his breast with knowledge of the divine oneness, facilitates his concerns, lifts his hardship, keeps from him the evil of man and jinn, and protects him from the harm of mishaps of the night and day."

Comments:

1. Why doesn't he mention evidence from the Quran or the Sunnah, rather than quoting Ibn Ayyad?
2. How did ibn Ayyad know this?
3. Not only do they invent a du'a, but they specify timing! Prescribing a particular time of day mimics the authentic dhikr of the Prophet SAAWS, who many times specified timing (i.e., morning, evening, laylat'ul-qadr, etc.).
4. In doing these innovated useless Dhikrs, it steals the time for making authentic, acceptable du'aa, from the followers.

5. Since we know that no evidence for this exists, then who gave him the authority to specify results of this Dhikr? Only Allah and His Messenger have the authority to make such statements.

In Page 19Keller quotes another Sufi (Ahmad Zarruq) saying regarding hizb al-Bahr:

"As for bringing about effects with this invocation, it is commensurate with one's aim and aspiration that one has command of it to draw or repel, intending what is desired when ones say, (And subject to us this sea)."

Comments:

1. Same as comments #1 and 5 above.
2. It seems therefore that one can get just about anything by making this Dhikr and asking "(And subject to us this Sea)"!!

In Page 35 Keller says:

"Ibn 'Ayyad relates in the Mafakhir al-'aliyya that al-Hizb al-kabir is a litany after the dawn prayer. He says: 'One does not speak to others while reciting it, and it contains a great secret in everything that no one knows except Allah.'"

Comments:

1. How does he know that "it contains a great secret" that only Allah knows about. That would mean that this secret is a part of the Unseen. Only a prophet could know what Allah has withheld from humanity and kept in the unseen, so is there any evidence for this from the sources of revelation, the Quran and Sunnah? Or does he claim prophethood?
2. What is his evidence from the Quran of the Sunnah that a person must avoid talking to other people while reciting it? Note: that it is permissible to interrupt the recitation of the Quran to speak.

In Page 74, Keller says about al-Wadhifa (a Sufi supplication):

He said about al-Wadhifa (Sufi supplication): "Our teacher (Allah sanctify his secret) mentions that whoever recites it regularly is protected from magic by the leave of Allah Most High."

Comments:

1. What is the evidence that this supplication protects from magic?
2. Making such a claim entails the following:
    - People are driven away from the supplications in the Sunnah. The Prophet SAAWS stated that magicians can't resist the effect Surah 2 (a-

Baqarah). He also directed his Ummah to read the last 3 chapters in the Quran.

- The Sufis are making supplications that compete with what the Prophet SAAWS has brought. In essence, this is a sign of disrespect to the status of our beloved Prophet SAAWS by abandoning his role as a lawgiver and inventing supplications that will eventually lead people to neglect his Sunnah.

In Pages 87-88, Keller says about hizb al-Nasr (victory) (a Sufi supplication):

After mentioning the hizb al-Nasr (victory) he said: "This invocation may be recited by someone who wants to destroy an enemy such as an unbeliever at war with Muslims. The way it is done is to pray the nightfall prayer ('isha), and when people have gone to sleep, to renew one's ablution, pray two rak'as, then to sit as one does for the Testification of Faith in the prayer, and recite with concentration and full presence of heart the word of Allah most High (Allah suffices us and is best to rely on) 450 times, followed by the above-mentioned litany; and one continues thus, repeating the two as long as one can. One does this for a number of nights until the need is fulfilled."

Comments:

1. On what basis do Keller and his masters claim that hizb al-Nasr brings victory when invoked? If it was based on a sound hadith, then let them
2. bring it forward. If it was based on personal experience, then based on whose experience, under which circumstance, etc. Also, since when does one's personal experiences become a source for legislation for all Muslims?
3. If this were an authentic du'aa, the Sufis would have no enemies left on earth!
4. What really brings victory to Muslims are:
    - Having Taqwa and patience as Allah the Most High said: "But if ye are constant and do right, not the least harm will their cunning do to you" (Surah 3, Verse 120)
    - Preparing the Ummah militarily, economically, spiritually, etc. Allah said, "Against them make ready your strength to the
    - utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies, of Allah and your enemies, and others besides, whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doth know." (Surah 8, Verse 60)
    - Having purity of faith and doing good deeds, "Allah has promised to those amongst you who have faith and do righteous actions that He will certainly grant them the succession of rule (khilaafah) in the land, as He granted it to those before them; and that He will grant them the authority to practice their Religion which He has chosen for them and that He will replace their state of fear, for one of safety; provided that

they worship Me alone and not direct worship to others along with Me." (Surah 24, Verse 55)

- The du'a of the weak and oppressed among the Ummah, "When ye sought help of your Lord and He answered you (saying): I will help you with a thousand of the angels, rank on rank. Allah appointed it only as good tidings, and that your hearts thereby might be at rest. Victory cometh only by the help of Allah. Lo! Allah is Mighty, Wise." (Surah 8, Verses 9-10) The Prophet SAAWS made du'a at the night before the Battle of Badr, until his upper garment fell. By dawn, he came with the glad tiding from Allah SWT to the believers, concerning their enemies, "Their multitude will be put to flight, and they will show their backs. Nay but the Hour is their appointed time, and the Hour will be more grievous and more bitter." (Surah 54, Verses 45-46)

In Pages 94, Keller says about the Latifiyya (a Sufi supplication):

"The Latifiyya is recited in a group on Tuesday nights, and there is general permission to participate for both people who have taken the tariqa and others who may attend."

Comments:

1. Where did this Latifiyya come from?
2. Who has the authority to give the permission? There is not a single hadith in which the Prophet SAAWS gave permission to some people to do certain type of dhikr.
3. What if someone did some of the tariqa Dhikr without permission? Will he/she be held responsible on the Day of Judgment for that? Will some harm befall him/her?

General comments on Secrecy in Sufism:

By now, the reader must have noticed the following:

1. The word "secret" has been used quite often. This raises a very legitimate question: Why are there so many secrets in Sufism? As Muslims, when we read the Quran, we find Allah SWT emphasizes the fact that He made the Quran clear and simple so that we may understand it. The same thing can be said about the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet SAAWS, who stated that he left us on a clear path with a clear law, as recorded by Ibn Majah and others.
2. There are many Sufi-made dhikrs that are designed to be invoked at certain times (i.e. early morning or late afternoon) or to achieve certain benefits. The Prophet SAAWS has also taught his Ummah dhikrs for similar times and circumstances. It is very clear that the vast majority

of people will find themselves in a position where they have to choose between the dhikr prescribed by the great Prophet SAAWS or the Sufi-invented one. This shows that Sufi dhikr eventually leads to ignoring the Sunnah. This is especially true if one considers the great emphasis Sufi sheikhs make to their dhikr.

Using problematic Sufi terms or concepts

In Pages 1, Keller says:

"This blessed collection contains those of the invocations and prayers of the Pole and Succor my master Abul Hasan al-Shadhili."

Comment:

Before stating the comments, let's consider first the definition of the terms "pole" and "Succor". The term Pole in Sufi literature means the "perfect" man whom Allah looks after in the earth, all the affairs of creation revolve around him. He takes his way in the universe, both the seen and unseen parts of it, as the spirit takes its way in the body. He could also be called al-Gouth (Succor i.e. helper) because people seek his assistance in case of adversity. Ahmad al-Tijani (the founder of the Tijani Sufi order) said: " the reality of the Pole status is that he is great vicegerent of Al-haqq (i.e. Allah) in all the universe, wherever Allah is a god, the pole is his vicegerent in the sense that he (i.e. the pole) carries out all the decrees that Allah might have. So, nothing will reach the creation except through

1. A Muslim wonders where the Sufis got these ideas from. The Sufis claim that they follow the Quran and the Sunnah but they adopt concepts that contradict these two sources.
2. Why would Allah need a human to help him in running the affairs of the universe?
3. What are our duties as "generic" Muslims towards the Pole?
4. Should we seek help, in case of adversity, from Allah or from the Pole/Succor?

In Pages 6, Keller says:

"… And he in turn from the Succor my master Abu Madyan…"

Comments:

See the comment above

In Page 8, Keller says:

He mentions in his chain of narrators: " and he took it from the Imam of those of the path and of ultimate reality my master Fakhr al-Din, of the Poles with command over the temporal, who took it from the godly Pole my master Nul al-Din Abul Hasan "Ali, the Gnostic who joined between the secrets of higher reality and the subtleties of the path, and he from the Axis of Existence my master Muhammad Taj al-Din, who guided people to Allah through Allah… who took it from the Axis of the friends of Allah.."

Comment:

1. See the comment above
2. What are "the secrets of higher reality and the subtleties of the path"?
3. What does the Axis of Existence mean? Who gave him this title? What would our obligations towards such a person be?

In Pages 36-37, Keller says:

"And your will is too exalted to be agreed with or contravened by anything that exists."

Comments:

1. If anything that exists does not agree with Allah's will then is it not contravening (disregarding) Allah's will.
2. If something neither agrees with nor disagrees with Allah's will, then where does it stand regarding it!?

In Pages 37, Keller says:

"There is no god but Allah is the secret of the entity of the messenger of Allah;"

Comments:

1. What is this supposed to mean in simple terms to be understood by "generic" Muslims? Another secret?
2. How can the basis of a message (there is no god but Allah), one known to all the messengers of Allah from Adam to Muhammad (alayhum asalam), be a secret?
3. In truth, every "common" Muslim, in fact, every Kafir, every human being was born a witness to Allah's sole Lordship. The secret's out!

In Pages 39, Keller says:

"I ask You by the reverence due to teacher, by the sanctity of the Guiding Prophet, by the sacredness of the Seventy eight, by the inviolability of the secrets of what was given from You to the unlettered prophet Muhammad…"

Comments:

1. Keller does not provide us with information concerning who are these Seventy eight. The following are some legitimate questions:
2. "Seventy eight what?"
3. What sacredness do they have?
4. Who gave them this sacredness?

Since we all follow the Quran and the Sunnah, we need clear evidences from any of these two for any seventy eight.

In Pages 52, Keller says:

"And make me the treasury of the Forty;"

Comments:

1. This supplication tells us nothing about who are these Forty. Forty what?
2. Also, it does not say anything about the importance of being their treasury.
3. As noticed in other locations in this work of Keller, concepts are introduced without supporting them with any evidence from the Quran or the Sunnah.
4. This casts a doubt regarding the Sufi claims that they are the true followers of the beloved Prophet SAAWS. If they truly follow him, then they would confine themselves to the tariqa (path) he SAAWS presented to the Muslims. The tariqa of this great Prophet is well explained in his Sunnah, so why don't Muslims abide by his Sunnah and stay away from newly invented matters that divide the Ummah (into tariqas).

In Pages 56, Keller mentions In Da'awat al-sheikh Abul Hasan (the supplications of sheikh Abul Hasan):

"Through the name of the controller, the All-powerful, and the Almighty is the final term of everything, And it is He who makes me triumph: Qaf Jim Nun Sad, Give me victory…"

Comments:

1. These letters are similar to the letters found at the start of some chapters in the Quran. No authentic hadith gives an explanation of their meaning. Hence, why are we asked to invoke upon Allah with something whose meaning is not known to us.
2. Is this to add more mystery to the Sufi path? <"Qaf Jim Nun Sad, Give me…">? Is he inventing a new spelling of Allah's name? Or calling upon letters of the Arabic alphabet, when invocation is due to Allah alone? Maybe he is trying to sound cool with some special "hocus pocus, abra cadabra" terminology? This is

3. not the way the Prophet SAAWS used to make du'aa. Indeed, it is very far from the methods of the Prophet SAAWS.
4. One might think that "Qaf Jim Nun Sad," is meant as a reference to the Quran. However, none of the Quranic chapters start with Jim !!

In Pages 62,63, and 74, Keller mentions In Hizb al-sheikh Abul 'Abbas al-Mursi:

In hizb Abul 'Abbas al-Mursi, Keller mentions:

1. **"I ask You by these, and by all verses and names, and by the mighty of them, and the Fatiha, and Ayat al-kursi, and the closing verses, and by 'Ameen' when simultaneous, and by the ha of mercy, the two mims of Power, and the dal of forever"**

2. **"Ahun, Qaf, Adumma, Humma, Ha', Ameen. Kaf Ha Ya 'Ayn Sad."**
3. **"Ahun, Qaf, Adumma, Humma, Ha', Ameen."**

Comments:

1. The above sentences contain some of the Arabic alphabets. We request any Sufi to provide us with a verse or authentic hadith explaining the meaning of these letters. Since it is well-known to Muslim scholars that there is no such verse or authentic hadith, we wonder why do the Sufis leave the clear meaningful authentic supplications of the beloved Prophet SAAWS for supplications invented by someone who lived 6 centuries after the Prophet SAAWS, and whose so called supplications have many mysterious components. Also, if you read these invented supplications in Arabic you will easily noticed their weakness in style, besides problematic content.
2. This in and of itself is a clear indication that the Sufi masters who claim to love the Prophet SAAWS are, knowingly or unknowingly, disrespecting him by proposing alternatives to the dhikr the Prophet SAAWS brought

In Pages 77-78, Keller mentions In Al-Wadhifa:

"And plunge me into the seas of the absolute oneness which encompasses the composite and the simple; and pluck me from the mires of affirming [tawheed], to the infinite space of singularizing the One, transcendently beyond absoluteness or conditionednees; And drown me in the very sea of oneness [al-Wahdah], in Gnostic vision, until I do not see, or hear, or find, or sense anything but it, whether descending or ascending, as shall ever be existence."

[Note: what is between the brackets is the original word in Arabic text of Al-Wadhifa. I did not use Keller's translation because it does not convey the **full** Arabic meaning.]

Comments:

1. Can an average Muslim understand this statement? Why do some people make religious knowledge so difficult although Allah SWT said about His own book: "And We have indeed made the Quran easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition?" (Surah 54 verse 17)
2. Oneness (al-Wahdah):

   Is he talking about Oneness of being in Sufi terms? The Sufis say: Oneness of Being (Wahdat-al-Wujud) in Islam means that nothing in this world can contain God, but God contains everything. Or nothing is God, but nothing is separate from God.

   If this is what he is talking about, then this contradicts the articles of faith as Muslims know it.

In Pages 99, Keller quoted Abul Hasan al-Shadhili –the founder of his tariqa- saying:

"He who guided you to this world has cheated you; he who guides you to work has tired you;"

Comments:

1. What about the hadith in which the Prophet said, "For everyday the sun rises, one must pay charity…" until he said "and to help a craftsman is a charity, and to help an unskilled person is a charity." Who takes precedence over the other, the Prophet SAAWS or al-Shadhili?
2. Subhan Allah – the clear contradictions and yet the claims of following the Sunnah.

Weak/confusing/meaningless statements

In Pages 17, Keller mentions in hizb al-Bahr:

1. **"Ta Sin. Ha Mim, 'Ain Sin Qaf. He has loosed the two seas that meet, between them is a barrier they do not cross.**
2. **Ha Mim Ha Mim, Ha Mim, Ha Mim, Ha Mim. The matter be done, the victory come, against us they shall not be helped".**
3. **"Bismillah is our door, Tabarka our walls, Ya Sin our roof, Kaf Ha Ya 'Ayn Sad our sufficiency, Ha Mim 'Ayn Sin Qaf our protection."**

Comments:

These underlined parts of the above statements are letters in the Arabic alphabets. They have no meaning on their own. They render the statements above meaningless

unless there is a Sufi secret behind them. We request the Sufi to present evidence from the Quran or the Sunnah explaining the meaning of any of these letters.

Interestingly, some of these letters have specific meaning within the Sufi community. For example: Abu Yazed al-Bastami[7] said that Qaf (an Arabic letter) is the name of the mountain that surrounds

In Pages 71-72, Keller mentions in hizb Abul 'Abbas al-Mursi:

1. **"Qaf Jim are two secrets from Your secret, each signifying other than You; "**
2. **"My nothingness is my being, and my being is my nothingness."**

Comments:

Concerning the first statement, the reader is kindly requested to see the previous comment.

The second statement shows how the Sufis are fond of complicating Islam to the point of contradicting one's own statement.

In Pages 74, Keller mentions in hizb Abul 'Abbas al-Mursi:

At the end of the hizb of Abul 'Abbas al-Mursi, he mentions: "O High, O Great, O Clement, O All-knowing: Ahun, Qaf, Adumma, Humma, Ha', Ameen"

Comments:

Please see the above comments

In Pages 64-69, Keller mentions in hizb Abul 'Abbas al-Mursi:

1. **"O Allah, we ask You fear of You, hope in You, love of You, longing for You, intimacy with You and obedience to Your command on the carpet of beholding You, looking to You through You, and speaking of You through You."**
2. **"And make me with You always, ever before You, looking at You through You. And rid me of betweenness until there is no between between me and You"**

Comments:

1. What does the underlined part mean?

2. If we were to understand the last part of the second statement literally –as people do usually- then we could interpret it to mean becoming united with Allah.

Gh'ulu (going to the extreme) regarding the Prophet SAAWS

In Pages 75, Keller mentions:

"O Allah Most Merciful and Compassionate: O Allah bless and give peace, in all matters, outward and inward, to him [the Prophet SAAWS] from whose exalted entity secrets were sundered…and through whom the knowledge of Adam descended in him and upon him; The understanding of the mystery entrusted to whom has stymied all creatures"

Comments:

1. There is no proof for such a statement from the Quran or the authentic Hadith.
2. In addition, the Prophet SAAWS is not in need for us to fabricate things about his character. What has been transmitted to us through the authentic Hadith about him is more than enough to prove that he has qualities above and beyond other created beings.

In Pages 89, Keller mentions in the al-Yaqutiyya Litany:

"O Allah bless and give peace to him whom You have made the cause of splitting asunder the secrets of Your illimitable oneness; and of the breaking forth of the effulgences of Your absolute mercy; becoming the representative of the numinous presence, and the successor of the secrets of Your divine entity."

Comments:

1. Neither Allah SWT nor the Prophet SAAWS has said this about Prophet Mohammad SAAWS.
2. In fact to claim that the Prophet SAAWS was the successor of the secrets of Your dive entity" is a very serious exaggeration and lie against our beloved Prophet SAAWS.
3. Indeed, the Prophet SAAWS said, "Do not praise me the way the Christians have praised the Son of Mary. I am only the slave and messenger of Allah, so SAY – about me- the slave and the messenger of Allah."

FOOTNOTES:

[1] This is sufism by Abdulrahman al-wakeel, pages 124 and 125. Published by Dar al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah, third edition 1979.

[2] Reliance of the Traveller by Nuh Keller, pg 1023

[3] and 5 The dispraise of al-Hawaa(desire) by Saleh as-Saleh, page 60.

[4] Jathbah means 'attraction', but the Sufis use it to refer to being in a state of attraction in which Allah attracts the sufi to His Presence.

[5] Tabakat Al-Sha'rani by Al-Sha'rani, part 2, page 143

[6] This is sufism by Abdulrahman al-wakeel, pages 124 and 125. Published by Dar al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah, third edition 1979.

[7] Aub Yazed al-Bastami is an early Sufi (d 261H). He is known for uttering some extremely problematic statements like "Glory be to me, how great is my state". Keller mentioned a very weak explanation for this statement in page 858, Reliance of the Traveller edition of 1994.